DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 332 PS 019 290

AUTHOR Tabu, Mikiko; Aoki, Hisako
TITLE Early Childhood Education in Japan. NIER Occasional Paper 01/90.
INSTITUTION National Inst. for Educational Research, Tokyo (Japan).
PUB DATE Jun 90
NOTE 32p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Historical Materials (060)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Comparative Analysis; *Educational History; Educational Needs; Federal Legislation; Foreign Countries; *Kindergarten; *Nursery Schools; *Preschool Education; *School Schedules; Social Change
IDENTIFIERS *Japan; State Regulation

ABSTRACT

Early childhood education in Japan is reviewed, and education in kindergarten classrooms and day nurseries is described. Activities during a typical day at kindergarten and at day nursery are profiled. An overview of the history of preschool education begins with the time when kindergartens were places for the children of the rich and day nurseries were places for the children of the poor, and neither institution had direct links to later education. The overview then moves through subsequent history to reach the time when, in 1981, over 90 percent of the nation's children were enrolled in either kindergarten or day nursery. Finally, the present situation of early childhood education in Japan is described and related areas of concern are discussed. An appendix contrasts kindergartens and day nurseries in terms of general aspects, the administrative system, program implementation, the contents of education and care, and the training of kindergarten teachers and nursery nurses. Relevant laws and regulations are indicated. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE

The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to: SO-JS

In our judgment, this document is also of interest to the Clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view. PS

NIER OCCASIONAL PAPER 01/90

ED329332

Early Childhood Education in Japan

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PS 019290

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Ryo Watanabe

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

National Institute for Educational Research of Japan

NIER OCCASIONAL PAPER 01/90

Early Childhood Education in Japan

PS 01690

National Institute for Educational Research of Japan
June 1990

© N I E R 1990

Published jointly by

the Section for International Co-operation in Education
and
the Section for International Co-operation in Research,

National Institute for Educational Research (NIER)

5-22 Shimomeguro 6 Chome, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, Japan

N O T E

This paper was prepared originally in Japanese by **Ms. Mikiko Tabu (Tokyo Gakugei University) and Ms. Hisako Aoki (Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education)** for translation into English for dissemination under the NIER's Information Services Programme among the Unesco Member States in Asia and the Pacific.

Every year, the school year starts in April. The season of cherry blossom is the time when, in every elementary school in Japan, the ceremony marking the beginning of formal schooling takes place. On 1 April, all the children who have had their sixth birthday in the past year enter their local school. Compulsory education in Japan lasts for 9 years, consisting of 6 years in elementary school and 3 years in lower secondary school. Every year in April all the pupils move up automatically to the next grade until compulsory education finishes in their fifteenth year.

If we take a look into the classroom of some pupils who have just started elementary school, we see some children crowded round the teacher asking all sorts of questions, some wandering around looking eagerly at their surroundings, some observing with apparent unease what is going on, and some silently engrossed in their own concerns. It's a very lively scene, and the teacher is very busy trying to cope with the demands of all the various children, but within the space of a few weeks the appearance of the classroom undergoes a complete change. After formal teaching begins, the children sit upright at their desks listening to what the teacher says or raising their hand when a question is put to the class. Under the teacher's directions, out-of-class activities are also carried on smoothly and without trouble. It is when one sees this that one has to remember the thorough groundwork that is laid before the children commence formal school education.

In fact, over 90 percent of all elementary school children in Japan have had some kind of experience of group life in a publicly recognized institution before starting school. And that experience may be seen as playing a very important role in preparing the children for school life. Of course, preschool education in Japan is not planned and implemented solely as a preparation for elementary school. On the contrary, trying not to be cast exclusively in this mold and aiming to lay the foundation of character development, preschool education has developed a wide range of theories and practices, and shows a face that is very different from the uniformity of education at elementary school and above. With this background in mind, the present paper aims to examine preschool education from the point of view of (1) the system, (2) a typical day, (3) historical development, and (4) the present situation and areas of concern.

1. The System of Preschool Education

Preschool care and education in Japan has traditionally been divided between two institutions, the kindergarten and the day nursery. The history of their formation and development will be dealt with later, but the present system rests on the basis of two laws enacted after the end of World War II. This whole edifice of two threads emerging from the loom of history and two administrative structures resting on two separate laws, is known to relevant specialists as the binary system of preschool education and care. The movement to remove the inconveniences and difficulties that this situation poses for children has a long history, but at the present time both types of facility have their separate roles in administering, with the cooperation of families, to the care and education of young children.

So how do the kindergarten and the day nursery differ from one

another? The easiest way to explain this is through a contrastive table, but such a table, focusing primarily on legal provisions, becomes somewhat complicated, so the table has been placed at the end as Appendix 1, and here only a simple account of the differences is given.

Essentially, the kindergarten is an educational institution based on the provisions of the School Education Law, while the day nursery is a welfare institution based on the Child Welfare Law. Arising from this difference in the legal basis are many differences, which can be looked at from the following three viewpoints.

(1) Appropriateness or Necessity

Children who have reached the age of three may enter kindergarten until the time comes for them to enter elementary school. In other words, this period is seen as the appropriate one for preschool education, and it is determined that kindergartens may receive children of this age range. It is from the same standpoint of appropriateness that the number of days children attend in a year is fixed at 220 and the number of hours in a day at 4.

On the other hand, babies and children in need of care may attend a day nursery from soon after birth until it is time for them to begin elementary school and, if necessary, after starting school. Open throughout the year for 8 hours a day, the day nurseries are designed to meet the children's need for care. To cope with cases of parents who work long hours or work at night, day nursery hours can be extended, within set limits, beyond 8 hours. Also, since children of the same age as those attending kindergarten also attend day nurseries, the contents of activities for children aged 4 and over are similar to those found in kindergartens, thus ensuring that the children's educational needs are satisfied.

(2) Contract of Official Measures

In the case of a kindergarten, the parents or guardians of a child, taking into account such questions as location, educational purpose, religion and fees, select from among the available kindergartens one which they consider suitable and make an application for admission. On the basis of a variety of criteria, the kindergarten then decides which children to admit. In other words, kindergarten education begins on the basis of an agreed contract between the parents or guardians of the child and the kindergarten. In principle, the fees for all children attending any given kindergarten are the same, although there are large differences between the fees charged by one kindergarten and another.

In the case of a day nursery, parents may apply for a place, but even if there are vacant places, children cannot enter automatically. As a general principle, only those children judged by the Welfare Office to be in need of care are allowed to enter. When the Welfare Office has judged that a child is suitable for entry, it takes the necessary measures to enable the child to be enrolled in a local day nursery. The charge levied on the parents or guardians of a child who is enrolled is decided on the basis of whether the child is under or over 3 years old and according to the family income; the local municipal or village office carries out the detailed calculations necessary to decide the required amount.

(3) Complementing or Replacing the Role of the Family

The distinction is rather stereotyped, but conventional thinking has long been that the kindergarten complements, while the day nursery replaces, the role of the family, and this is still strongly reflected in the present-day system. In this way, the primary function of each institution is assigned, and it follows that marked differences in the contents of education will be found between one and the other. In the case of the kindergarten, emphasis is placed on enabling children to receive, through the organization, experiences which are felt to be educationally desirable, but which cannot be given within the framework of the family. Group living experiences, intellectual learning activities and creative constructional activities, carried out under the guidance of trained specialist teachers, make up the curriculum of the kindergarten.

In the case of the day nursery on the other hand, particular emphasis is placed on trying to nurture the children in a family-like environment, aiming to give them emotional stability and self-reliance. As in the case of kindergarten teachers, the nursery nurses to whom these duties are entrusted have received special training, and through group living activities they try to impart the necessary skills and knowledge required by the children in daily life. In the case of the older children, a curriculum similar to that of the kindergarten is also provided.

2. A Day in a Kindergarten and a Day Nursery

The pattern of a day's activities in a kindergarten or day nursery will vary according to regional characteristics or the policy of the institution concerned, but in broad outline it can be described as follows:

(1) A Day in a Kindergarten

The contents of a day in a kindergarten are planned so as to suit the development of the children in each of the different age groups from 3 to 5 years old. The environment is arranged so as to provide substantial living and play experiences for the children, and the four hours of the day unfold with the basic aim of encouraging the children to take an active part in whatever is going on.

Arrival at the Kindergarten

On arrival, the children, who have been brought by their parents, exchange greetings with the teacher and chatter among themselves while they put away their possessions. They talk about things that happened at home, what they saw on their way to the kindergarten, their friends and similar topics, and when they have told the teacher what they wanted to, they each begin to play. During this time, the teacher listens, supervises the putting away of individual possessions, sees whether each child looks well and healthy, and looks forward, imagining how the pattern of play will develop on that day.

Contact with Plants and Animals

Realizing that children in urban areas are not able to have the experience at home of keeping animals or cultivating flowers and vegetables, and wanting to give them the chance at an early age of contact with small animals and the soil, kindergartens include the care of animals and plants in the daily schedule. So giving food to the rabbits, the tortoise, guinea pigs, small birds and the like, watering the flowers and seeing how the vegetables are growing, takes up part of the morning. When baby rabbits or birds are born, making a home for them becomes part of the play activities. Similarly, when the tomatoes become ripe, voices can be heard wanting to eat them for lunch, or when the flowers bloom, wanting to pick them to decorate the classroom. All of this adds to the richness of the day's activities. In caring for the plants and animals, the five-year old take the lead, but the three- and four-year old children also get a chance to touch and observe them.

Play

Play occupies a central part in the life of the kindergarten and is considered very important as a means of self-training for the children. The teacher's task, on the basis of an assessment of the previous day's play and on the children's behaviour in the morning, is to look for ways of play that are likely to be interesting and to structure an environment, including a location for play and the necessary implements, in such a way that the children can freely take what they need when they feel they need it. In addition, the teacher also has the job, when the children's interest seems to be slackening off, of introducing new forms of play and playing with them, thereby broadening their horizons and raising their enthusiasm again.

The children also play in the kindergarten grounds, making use of fixed pieces of equipment and other items to exercise their bodies. At other times, adapting their play to changes in the seasons, they enjoy playing with sand or mud, playing house, catching insects or pulling up grass and weeds. In the summer, the children like water play or playing in the pool, and in the winter, in northern Japan, they can play in the snow. In this way, the pattern of play also reflects the particular characteristics of various regions.

Indoors, toys and play implements, paper and scissors and other educational materials, chosen with a view to encouraging development, are available for the children to use freely. Either individually or with friends, they construct their own play areas and things to play with, and become absorbed in make-believe play or indoor physical exercise.

Songs and rhythmical modes of expression are also incorporated into their play and activities. Opportunities are created for the children to watch and listen to television, films, puppet plays and the like, with the aim of providing experiences which can serve as a base for a rich variety of expressive activities.

Through such kinds of play the children learn the way of associating with others, engage in lively conversation, discover the mysteries of nature, satisfy their intellectual curiosity by experimenting with quantities and shapes, and generally accumulate experiences designed to enable them to express themselves and grow in a lively, unfettered way.

As well as introducing new forms of play and guiding the play in a particular direction, the teachers on occasion bring the whole of one year-group together to make the necessary preparations for various events, such as the Tanabata Festival, Sports Day or the kindergarten Arts Festival. Playing either as individuals or in groups, the children are able, through activities of this kind carried out on a year-group basis, to make different friends and get to know more teachers. Parents and local people also come to the events, so that the children are able to experience a different atmosphere and enjoy the change in their pattern of life.

Even when giving directions to all the children together, the teachers still make sure that the children can have a sense of being at play and being free to develop their own interests. However, there are cases where on the one hand teachers, even though their basic philosophy may be as described above, exert too strong a sense of direction and interrupt the children's play, and where on the other hand they just let the children play without giving any directions. One can also find cases where the teachers engage in direct teaching activities, with the children as passive recipients, laying emphasis on physical and intellectual development.

Lunch

During the morning, children are engaged in all kinds of enjoyable play activities and by the time they remember their stomachs, it's time for lunch. For lunch, the children eat food which their mothers have prepared at home and which they have brought with them, and in the winter there are facilities for heating up food so as to give them a warm meal. Only very few kindergartens have a separate lunch room, so that in most cases lunch is eaten in the classroom, with table napkins spread out over the desks and flower decorations arranged to create an atmosphere suitable for a group meal. The time available for eating varies from 20 minutes to an hour; in the case of five-year old, they are normally expected to finish their meal in half an hour. Through such things as going to the toilet and washing their hands beforehand, setting out the meal and tidying up afterwards, they also learn good table manners.

Afternoon Play

After lunch, the children take a rest while they look at picture books or picture encyclopedias, listen to music, play with puzzles and shaped pieces of card, fold origami paper into attractive constructions, or follow their own individual interests. When everybody has finished eating and the room is tidied up, the children either go outside or into a play area, and continue with what they were doing in the morning or look for some new form of play. Since the time available for play after lunch is short, what the children do has to be broken off part way through, for continuation the next day.

Going Home

Before they leave the kindergarten to go home, the children tidy up the areas where they have been playing or carrying out other activities and they gather, in each class, into a group. There, the teacher talks about what has happened during the day, what is planned for the next day, etc., confirms

that the children understand anything they have to do, and makes sure that they are properly dressed before handing them over to their parents who have come to collect them.

In addition to the times each day when the children are brought to or collected from the kindergarten, contact with parents is maintained through discussion meetings or opportunities for class observation. It is usual for such occasions to be arranged on a monthly basis, thereby increasing mutual understanding between teachers and parents.

(2) *A Day in a Day Nursery*

The day nursery opens its doors early. Along with the annual increase in the number of mothers going out to work, the number of children, from babies to 5-year olds, entrusted to day nurseries, is also increasing. Special arrangements (early morning care) are made to receive children from early in the morning.

Special Early Morning Care

When the early arrivals are brought by their father or mother in the morning, the children are handed over to the nursery nurse in a specially prepared room. When the child has been emotionally reassured by talking or clinging to the nursery nurse, its attention turns to the various toys and materials provided and it begins to play with building blocks, picture books, colouring books and the like. One can also see the older children looking after or playing with the smaller ones.

Arrival

Between 8:30 and 9:00 is the regular time for children to arrive in the mornings. After a brief exchange with the parent, covering the child's state of health, any special points to be noted during the day, etc., the child is entrusted to the nursery nurses. After putting away outside clothes and chatting to the nursery nurse, the child begins to play. For one- and two-year old babies and infants, there should be one nursery nurse for every three infants, and for children of three or more, one nursery nurse for every twenty children. After all necessary contact with parents has been completed, each child begins the pattern of the day's activities corresponding to his/her stage of development.

The early arrivals also move from the special room where they have been into separate rooms, where they begin to play with the other children in their group. By 9:10, almost all the children will have arrived.

Play

The content of play in a day nursery corresponds to that in a kindergarten, and in groups of twos and threes the children go out into the grounds, where they can play with sand and mud, join with other children in group games, use the play equipment (slides, etc.) provided, play some game using a ball or rope or simply enjoy themselves with their own particular form of play.

In day nurseries, given their function of caring for and nurturing children who have none to look after them during the day, it is usual for emphasis to be placed on promoting the children's health. Consequently, things are arranged so that as far as possible play in the mornings takes place out of doors, also efforts are made to encourage a warm, family-like atmosphere, with three-, four- and five-year old playing together.

At 10:30 it is time for the under threes to take their morning snack, while the four- and five-year olds gather in a room to start some other kind of play. The day is structured so that at different times the children of a particular class will play a particular game, express themselves rhythmically in some form, mould plasticine, draw pictures, or engage in some kind of craft activity or the like. This device of changing the form of play at intervals is one device employed by day nurseries that have children from early in the morning, because the period of care is very long. By creating a daily rhythm based on alternation between quiet and activity, tension and relaxation, it is possible to satisfy the interests and needs of each individual child.

By having this kind of experience, the children learn how to construct a daily rhythm for themselves, and their play takes on a dynamic character, so that at a particular time, when during the morning they become absorbed in a particular kind of plays, their thoughts suddenly shift to something else and they change to a different kind of play.

However, it cannot be denied that in trying to establish a sense of daily rhythm in the children, the time schedule tends to become very rigid, with a move away from the original purpose of play and an increasingly strong move towards set learning activities at fixed times. As a result of reflecting on this situation, in recent years, the period of early childhood development, seen as part of the progression towards youth and adolescence, has become a subject for discussion, resulting in demands for greater flexibility on the part of day nurseries and a recognition of the importance of play based on children's interests and needs.

Because the pattern of life experienced by children in a day nursery may easily become rather uniform, efforts are made to take them for walks outside the nursery during their play period to enable them to have contact with local people and broaden their view of life. Also, it is common for the supervising nursery nurse or Director of the nursery to take children shopping or to the bank, thereby exposing them to aspects of society that they do not have a chance to encounter within the framework of their own family.

Lunch

In preparing lunch, the nutritional value suitable for the age of the children is calculated, and account is taken for each child of its state of health, preferences and the amount of food it can eat. In the case of small babies, a considerable amount of time is allowed for feeding them, while children of three and over take turns in helping with preparations for the meal, setting the table and serving the food. Since children who have attended a nursery since they were babies and those who attend for the first time after becoming three or four differ in terms of the life style they are used to, the time taken over a meal or expectations regarding its contents, account is taken of individual differences. After the meal if finished, the

children clean their teeth and put the lunch things away.

Afternoon Nap

One- and two-year olds are allowed to sleep for as long as they each want to. In the case of those children aged three and over, after lunch the mattresses are spread out on the nursery floor and the children change into their pajamas and prepare to sleep. These arrangements for an afternoon nap are made so as to ensure that the children get enough sleep corresponding to their age, taking into consideration the fact that in order have sufficient contact time with their families, they tend to go to bed late and get up early.

Before they go to bed, the children look at picture books, listen to a story or listen to some music, after which they usually sleep for between one and two hours. When children become five and the time approaches when they will have to start school, it is very common for them not to need an afternoon nap, in which case they play somewhere where they will not cause annoyance to those children who are sleeping.

While the children are sleeping, the nursery nurses discuss plans among themselves, write any messages to be passed on to parents, and prepare what they will do the next day.

Afternoon Snack

When all the children have woken up from their nap, they change back out of their pajamas and help to put the mattresses away. When they have been to the toilet and washed their hands, it's time for their afternoon snack. Careful attention is paid to the contents of this, depending on such factors as the season for the year and what they had for lunch.

Afternoon Play

During the afternoon play period, the nursery nurses are busy cleaning up the inside of the rooms, so the children are left to play entirely as they please. Three-, four- and five-year olds all play together, so the children can experience the sense of playing in a mixed age group of older and younger children. As the time for going home is by now very close, they tend to play games such as chasing one another rather than pulling things out and playing with them.

Because the main day nursery room is multi-purpose, having to serve as a play area, a lunch room and a sleeping area (in places that have a special play room, there are occasions when this is also used for the afternoon nap), so it is difficult to leave undisturbed play structures such as a rocket base or a corner for playing house. Hence there is a tendency for play to be interrupted, but since outdoor play can be carried on continuously, one can see five-year olds coming together and structuring their play in a dynamic way.

Going Home

Between 4:00 and 4:30 p.m. is the time for those children who are not

staying on for extended care to be collected by their parents. While the parents and nursery nurses are exchanging messages, the children, begrudging even a few minutes spent away from play, get absorbed in their play activities and have to be pulled away by their parents.

The nursery nurses who started at 8:00 leave at the same time as the children, while those responsible for extended care in the evening stay on. However, regular duty hours of the nursery nurses ends at 5:00 p.m.

Evening Extended Care

The children who stay on for extended evening care gather in one room in the same way as those who come early in the morning, and are put in the care of the nursery nurse(s) designated to look after them. In the winter, when the sun sets early, they stay indoors, while in the summer, when sunset is later, they play out of doors. One can find cases where those children who spend a long time in the institution, receiving extended care in the early morning and late evening, tend to become vary uneasy, so the nursery nurses give them special individual attention.

3. The History of Preschool Education

The history of both the two institutions responsible for preschool education and care in Japan, the kindergarten and the day nursery, begins at the same time as Japan's modernization in the latter half of the 19th century. But until the 1950s, dissemination was very slow and their influence remained restricted. For a long time, kindergartens were places for the children for the rich, and day nurseries places for the children of the poor. Also, these two types of institutions had no direct link with elementary or later school education. Bearing these points in mind, let us take a closer look at the further development of preschool education.

In 1867, the samurai government that had ruled Japan until that time, was overthrown. When a form of government with the Emperor at its head was established in its place, the establishment of modern national institutions modelled on those found in advanced Western countries began to be steadily promoted. This was the so-called Meiji Restoration. For more than 350 long years, during the Edo era, the fallen government had pursued a policy of national isolation.

The Edo era was free from external wars and major internal disturbances, and although the country was repeatedly afflicted by natural disasters and famines, it was a period of peace and stability. Within this framework, a characteristic form of culture developed, and education flourished. The children of the ruling samurai classes spent their early years receiving in their homes training appropriate to their social status and rudimentary academic instruction. When they became a little older, they were instructed in the scholastic and martial arts in schools reserved for the children of samurai. The children of merchants of the towns, priests or lordless samurai learnt the rudiments of reading, writing and calculating in private schools (terakoya), established in temples or private homes. Even in poor rural areas, the terakoya could be found, and at the end of the Edo era their number is said to have been around fifteen or twenty thousand.

Because the society had a low rate of productivity, not all children who were born could be educated, and it seems that a considerable number were killed shortly after birth. However, the fortunate children were treated with great care and brought up under the gaze of broad-minded and warm-hearted adults. With the influence of the belief that "children under seven are the property of the gods", they spent their early childhood untouched by severe discipline or chastisement.

However, within this framework in the houses of samurai or rich merchants, precepts expounding the way of bringing up children on the basis of a careful study of their stage of development were handed down, and thinkers emerged who talked of the importance of teaching in the early years. There were also agriculturalists who conceived of institutions similar to the day nurseries of today, for the children of poor farmers.

The Meiji Restoration was a radical revolution that affected every aspect of politics, the economy and society. In the name of modernization, missions were sent to the West, and students went there to study. Man reports were written, and books were brought back. Preschool educational institutions were also introduced into Japan as one link is a modern school system, the establishment of which was being urged as a matter of urgency. Regulations governing the establishment of such institutions can already be found in the school system promulgated in 1872. However, this early attempt did not last long, and it was 1876 before an institution was established in earnest. This was the kindergarten attached to the Tokyo Women's Normal School. The model for the kindergarten was the German kindergarten of Froebel, and the Japanese term for 'kindergarten', which is still used today, is a direct translation of the German word.

Instruction is the first kindergarten was carried out by 'Froebel mistresses', who were familiar with German patterns. Also, the books used for reference on content and methodology were books written in English by kindergarten specialists concerned with Froebel methods. To qualify for entry, a child had to be over three and under six, and the period of instruction was set at 4 hours a day. The core of the curriculum consisted of Froebel games and the manipulation of a series of educational implements devised by Froebel. The timetable was divided into segments of 20 to 30 minutes each, and the fees charged were very high for the time.

In these circumstances, only the children of rich, upper-class families attended the kindergartens, and if one looks at the subsequent spread of kindergartens, one sees that for a long time they remained confined to such children. The kindergartens were also required to give high-level educational instruction, such as could not be given in families.

However, the kindergarten attached to the Tokyo Women's Normal School was a splendid institution, well equipped with facilities. At a time shortly after the promulgation of the school system, when even the equipping of elementary schools providing basic education was proceeding only at a snail's pace, when modernization had only just begun, and when there was no thought of preschool education, much less about the necessity of a special institution for that purpose, at this time a kindergarten costing a considerable sum of money was established with the help of the government. Why was this so? The reasons can probably be explained in the following way. In the first place,

among influential enlightened politicians and educators were those who believed in the importance of early education, and through the efforts of such people, the government came to acknowledge the establishment of kindergartens as a symbol of Japan's modernization. In the second place, preschool education was thought of as one with the education of women, and their training, as that of people who would bear the responsibility of citizens of the new state, was seen as a matter of urgent national importance.

Based on the model of the kindergarten attached to Tokyo Women's Normal School, national kindergartens attached to women's normal schools and other institutions in various districts gradually increased in number. However, even with the help of government policies of encouragement, the rate of dissemination was not rapid.

It was not long before private kindergartens began to be established. With female American teachers as the main support, Froebel-Type Christian kindergartens began to appear in many areas. The first one of these opened in 1880 as a kindergarten attached to Sakurai Women's School. With the advent of the 20th century, kindergartens adhering to the Buddhist faith also came to be established.

With the spread of kindergartens, there also came moves to establish an organized movement. The formation of the Froebel Association in 1896 is one major example of this, and such associations became the parent body of a movement urging the government to adopt a policy of systematizing kindergartens. 1899 saw the setting of 'Regulations for Kindergarten Education and Facilities', making the establishment for the first time of national standards for kindergartens. In 1926, the 'kindergarten Law' and 'Regulations for the Implementation of the Kindergarten Law' were promulgated, so that for the first time kindergartens became the subject of an independent law.

The educational content and curriculum of kindergartens also underwent several revisions in line with the establishment of this kind of legal framework. The application of the Western Froebel method, as could be seen in the early days of kindergartens, gradually became less, so that while the main framework was fixed, new items more applicable to the needs of Japanese children were freely introduced. This kind of change was brought about by many researchers and practitioners, with an especially important role being played by the head of the kindergarten attached to the Tokyo Women's Normal School (at that time Higher Normal School) and by missionaries who came to Japan from America.

The new educational ideas that spread through America and Europe from the end of the 19th through the first quarter of the 20th century also had a considerable influence on early childhood education in Japan. The child-centred view of education, the theories of Hall and Dewey from America, the Project Rules of Kilpatrick, the Montessori method from Italy, the rhythmical method of Dalcrose from France, etc. were gradually introduced into Japan by progressive educationalists. And in the 1910s and 1920s, many attempts at a new type of preschool education, which paid respect to the spontaneous acts of children, emerged and spread. This was also the time of the movement to raise the level of children's culture in literature and music, and this considerably enriched the contents of preschool education. However, with the subsequent emergence of imperialism, this kind of experiment gradually disap-

peared.

As far as day nurseries are concerned, one can find their origin in the various child care institutions that emerged in the Meiji era. In this very poor society, the care of babies and infants was the job of slightly older children, so that even after the establishment of the school system and the advent of compulsory education, may children did not go to school. Thus the practice arose at the end of the 1870s of babies and infants attending school and teachers taking it in turns to look after them and give lessons to the older children. Creches of this kind attached to schools formed the forerunner to Japanese child care institutions, but positive expansion policies were not developed to a sufficient extent and the subsequent development of such institutions was taken over by the private sector.

The first of these private institutions was established in Niigata in northern Japan in 1890, attache to Seishu School. In the beginning, it was a place for looking after babies and infants brought by children at the school, but it soon developed into a full-scale nursery employing nursery nurses. Around the same time, in a farming village in Tottori in Western Japan, a seasonally nursery was opened for the benefit of parents who were occupied on the land. This kind of seasonal nursery later spread throughout Japan.

Also, as the industrialization of society progressed, the demand for women's labour heightened, and a movement began to try to secure the services of women with small children by opening creches attached to factories. The first such creche was opened in 1894, attached to Tokyo Spinning Co. Ltd., and at first such creches were limited to the spinning industry, but soon they began to be attached to mining and other companies.

However, as explained above, kindergartens in Japan became established and spread as institutions to which only the children of the rich could gain admittance, but among those concerned with the development of kindergartens were benefactors who wanted to see the establishment of kindergartens for the children of the poor. Moreover, they wanted to establish institutions that had an educational function, not simply places that looked after poor children. Under the name of 'kindergartens for the poor', they began to be established from the 1890s in urban slums, mainly through the efforts of Christian volunteers. A classic example of this kind of kindergarten is Futabe Kindergarten, opened in 1900. Corresponding to the social demand for child care private-sector facilities were gradually established, but it was around 1910 before government subsidies came to be paid to them. The designation of child care facility was also adopted as a unified title. The establishment of public sector facilities came even later, in 1919, as one link in a chain of policies adopted after the large-scale social disturbances of the previous year. Subsequently, the creation of such facilities became an important social issue, and they received official government guidance as facilities that performed a different function from that of kindergartens.

From the 1930s on, the content of the care given in child care facilities came to be tinged with the function of keeping public order. In contrast to this was the rise of a movement, based on socialist principles, for the establishment of proletarian child care facilities which aimed to care for the children of the working class, but his movement was short-lived.

Around this time, the systematization of child care facilities began to move forward in the form of opposition to or competition with kindergartens. In 1926, immediately after the promulgation of the Kindergarten Law, figures connected with child care facilities convened a nationwide conference and put pressure on the government to institute a similar system on the child care side. However, this could not be achieved before the outbreak of World War II, and all that happened was an addendum to the Social Enterprises Law of 1938.

After war broke out, women soon began to be rounded up to increase production in place of the men who had gone off to the war. As a result, there was a large increase in the number of child care facilities, and kindergartens also extended their hours; at the end of the war, in every district, shrines, temples, libraries and schools were being used a emergency child care facilities.

At the end of the war, as explained above, two separate laws laid the foundation for kindergartens on the one had and child care facilities, which changed their designation to day nurseries, on the other. And so the two types of institutions, each with its own historical traditions, began to develop new forms of care.

Regarding the contents of care, the "Handbook of Early Child Education - Guidelines for Care", published in 1948, embodied thinking directed at care in day nurseries and families and not only in kindergartens; 12 categories, such as study and observation, rhythm and free play, were included. In the "Kindergarten Course of Study", limited to kindergartens, of 1956, the contents of care and education are divided into 6 categories, and through the implementation of these contents in the 1964 "Kindergarten Course of Study", kindergartens came to regulated by central government to a considerable extent. In the case of day nurseries too, the contents of the care they provided were regulated the following year, in 1965, by the "Directions for Day Nursery Care". The contents of care as in the current regulations (as of 15 March 1989) are spelt out in concrete form in Appendix 1.

If one looks at the methods of education and care, one sees that a variety of experiments have been carried out. For a while after the war, within the framework of American occupation policies, progressive educational theories were introduced, and education centred on children's interests and activities was advocated. The emphasis was on learning through experiencing, and importance was attached to free play. Before long, the influence of Soviet educational theory, introduced for the first time after the war, was also felt and the division of children into groups and work activities was also incorporated.

In the latter part of the 1960s, following American trends, the debate about early ability development arose, emphasis was placed on high learning ability in small children, and the quality and organization of preschool education began to become an issue. Knowledge of Freud spread among the general public, the theories of Brunner and Piaget attracted attention, and a Montessori revival occurred. All over the World, experiments with new types of preschool education were avidly introduced and tried out. Since then, up to the present day, information from the outside world has flowed into Japan at an increasing rate.

During this period, Japanese society has undergone a very rapid process of industrialization. Even if it was counted as one of the great powers, Japan before the war was still an agricultural society. The majority of children were born into families with strict patriarchal authority and brought up in large regional communities. After the war, this situation changed radically. The environment became urbanized, and regional communities and play areas diminished. The growth of nuclear families meant a decrease in family size, and the distance between parents and children became less. The educational demands of society as a whole became greater, and as interest in early development increased, parents staked their children's future on their education and became very strong advocates of kindergarten education. With the implementation of the promotion of kindergarten education in 1964, the number of public kindergartens increased to a certain extent, but was still insufficient. The establishment of private kindergartens in urban areas helped to remedy this, but still there were not enough facilities.

Given this situation, a report of the Central Council on Education in 1971 recommended as policy improvements that 1) the period from 4 or 5 through the early years of elementary school should be thought of as one period of early childhood education; 2) the distribution of public and private kindergartens should be made more equitable and the financial burden on parents lessened; 3) kindergartens should be expanded and a system of public subsidies introduced; and 4) the criteria for kindergarten curricula should be revised. On the basis of these recommendations, the Ministry of Education in 1972 prepared implementation plans for the development of kindergarten education. The main points of these plans were that within a 10-year time scale, all 4- and 5-year children who wished to do so should be enabled to attend kindergarten, the national subsidy to help with the establishment of private kindergartens should be raised. A system of financial encouragements to attend kindergartens should be instituted so as to lessen the burden on parents, and a system of financial subsidy for the running expenses of private kindergartens should be implemented (from 1975).

In the areas of nursery care, the industrialization of society also encouraged more women to go out into society and brought about an increase in the number of working mothers. However, the maximum number of children accepted in day nurseries was small, and there was inadequate implementation of care for infants after the end of maternity leave. In this situation, the formation of co-operative care facilities organized by parents became popular in 1960s, and a movement to encourage the establishing of more facilities gathered strength. In response to this, the Ministry of Health and Welfare implemented from 1967 a five-year plan for the urgent provision of more day nurseries, aiming at increasing both facilities and the numbers of children who could be accepted, and in a further five-year plan from 1971 implemented an additional increase in welfare facilities and the numbers who could be accepted in them.

As a result of these expansion policies of the 1960s and 1970s, the number of five-year old children attending either a kindergarten or a day nursery increased to over 90% in 1981.

4. The Present State of Preschool Education and Care, and Problem Areas

The quantitative expansion of preschool education moved steadily forward, reaching its peak in 1977. Thereafter, a steadily falling birth rate and a steady increase in the number of working mothers gave rise to new problems and new needs.

One problem is that because of the fall in numbers, the financial viability of private kindergartens worsened and day nurseries also suffered a shortfall in numbers. An increase in unplanned facilities worsened the situation still further, cases of competition between one kindergarten and another, or between a kindergarten and a day nursery, with the position varying according to the area, were frequently found, and closures of kindergartens also took place. In the case of day nurseries, among the reasons for the shortfall were that conditions were too severe or that actual opening hours and charges varied widely from parents' expectations.

Another problem is a diminution of the educational functions of families and local society. When both parents go out to work, the amount of time spent as a family is reduced, as is the amount of time spent bringing up children, helping to bring about a simplification and reduction of the process of daily life itself. Knowledge and experiences transmitted from parent to child within the family become less, and opportunities for learning things through family life and for developing strength and ability through the division of family duties decrease. The number of local adult residents able to watch over children's development during the day has also decreased, and because daily contact between neighbours decreases, the chances of experiencing contact with a range of different people also gets less. Above all, it becomes difficult to form groups of children of different ages, so the experiences that would be gained by growing up within such groups also become unattainable.

New needs can be broadly classified into two categories. One is the demand for preschool education designed to fit the needs of each individual child. When parents came to realize that children's growth and development was favourably influenced by the various experiences they encountered in group activities with children of different ages, carried out under skilled professional guidance, they began to demand facilities where children could have such experiences. And when the importance of high learning ability and emotional training in early childhood was recognized, parents began to want their children to receive early language and number training, to learn foreign languages or to have music and dance lessons during the preschool period. There was also a growing desire for an environment and training best suited to encourage the development and social adaptation of physically and mentally handicapped, or emotionally disturbed children. In response to this category of needs, and bearing in mind their own need for financial viability, the number of classes in private kindergartens for three-year old children, which had hitherto not been implemented to any large extent, was increased. However, because there is no provision for subsidies for such classes, their development has not been even and ordered. Also, in response to the demand for early educational content, special classes or lessons by visiting specialists have been introduced, but the problem remains of whether the introduction of education for three-year old children or this way of introducing it correspond to the real aims and nature of preschool education.

With regard to handicapped children, the Ministry of Health and Welfare implemented policies for the care of such children from 1974, designating special day nurseries for their care and providing financial assistance from the national budget. In the same year, the Ministry of Education also began to adopt the same kind of policies. Even now, however, the scope of implementation of such national policies is limited, and the majority of attempts to provide subsidies for integrated education are carried out at prefectural level. In addition, institutions providing guidance for babies and infants and support for mothers include (all figures as of 1986) preschool units attached to special schools (3 national, 6 local, 2 private), day facilities for the mentally retarded (217), and workshops for the mentally and physically handicapped (324).

The second category of needs comprises demands for better conditions for families. Even though one can say that it is now common for women to go out to work, the working environment is still very harsh, so that if a woman leaves her job, it is very difficult to find regular employment again after a space of several years. Hence, there was a demand for many years for more places for infants shortly after birth and for more places accepting children for extended hours (from early in the morning to around 7:00 p.m.). In addition, because of diversification in the pattern of work, demands arose for day nurseries including overnight stay facilities.

Day nurseries that accepted babies after the end of maternity leave or for extended hours gradually spread, so that in the 1970s they were fairly widespread in urban areas, but the implementation of night care was not realized until 1981. Until then, this demand was met by profit-making baby care enterprises. Also called baby hotels, these enterprises, accepting children without any troublesome administrative formalities, for any length of time during the day or night, at relatively cheap rates, increased at great speed and continued for a long period to function without any form of official supervision. A number of deaths occurred in some poor-quality facilities, and in 1981 the Ministry of Health and Welfare intervened in what had become a major social problem, confirming and implementing its authority to inspect baby hotels, and issuing directives allowing day nurseries to provide night care for extended hours. However, without any form of budgetary provision, the amount of real help this provided was minimal, so that this problem is still a long way from being solved. From the point of view, too, of providing care for a period desirable in terms of the development of the baby or infant, it is still necessary to search for a suitable solution.

In the area of kindergartens, too, one has seen demands from parents that the kindergartens should take the children for longer periods, provide lunches, provide transport to collect the children and bring them back, etc. In short, parents want to reduce and abridge the amount of time and trouble they spend on the children. And on the side of the kindergartens, there is a tendency to move towards meeting these demands in order to secure the supply of a sufficient number of children to ensure their continued viability.

If one looks at the present situation, therefore, one sees that there is not such a great difference between the demands parents are addressing to kindergartens on the one hand and day nurseries on the other. Even though the number of children has decreased, there are still unsatisfied demands. Since there are a sufficient number both of kindergartens and day nurseries,

it would be desirable for the administrative framework within which they operate to be realized, for both institutions to be run in a flexible manner, and for budgetary provisions to be made available as far as possible.

Against the background of the situation described above, the contents and criteria for preschool care and education in Japan are now being radically changed. Both the "Course of Study for Kindergarten Education" and the "Directives for Day Nursery Care" have been revised, and new versions were announced in 1989 with a view to full-scale implementation from 1990. Let us look briefly at the new contents with reference to these materials.

Looking first at the criteria for kindergarten education, the main feature is "education through the environment". This means that "early childhood is a time when, on the basis of a protective and trusting relationship with surrounding adults, children can explore of their own accord or be stimulated by their environment and by building up an accumulation of direct and concrete experiences, form their own personalities and acquire a variety of abilities which will serve as a base for daily life as human beings." With this in mind, it is necessary for kindergarten education to attach importance to:

1) Developing a lifestyle appropriate for small children;

2) giving comprehensive guidance through play;

3) providing education appropriate to each child's particular development characteristics.

Bearing in mind links with elementary school education and the need to make suitable provision for adaptation to the social environment, the following points need to be improved:

1) Formation of the ability to establish relationships with people;

2) A deepening of contact with nature and familiarity with the everyday environment;

3) Formation of basic social habits and attitudes.

The objectives of kindergarten education are as follows:

1) To nurture the basic social habits and attitudes necessary for a healthy, secure and happy lifestyle, and to lay the foundation for the development of a healthy mind and body;

2) To nurture feelings of affection and trust towards people, and to cultivate an attitude of independence and co-operation as well as a spirit of morality;

3) To nurture an interest in nature and everyday, familiar phenomena, and to cultivate the ability to respond to these with a rich and understanding heart and discernment;

4) To cultivate within the framework of everyday life an interest in words

and language and to enable the children to converse pleasantly;

5) To cultivate a richness of emotion and feelings through a variety of experiences, and enable the children to develop a spirit of creativity.

In terms of the composition of the curriculum the existing formulation that the school year "must consist of 220 days" is rewritten to say that it "must consist of XX weeks", but a standard day still consists of 4 hours as hitherto, and it is urged that application should be flexible, depending on such factors as regional characteristics, the physical and mental development of the children, the season of the year, etc.

The objectives given above are set out as concrete 'aims' in terms of subject-based categories, and the items necessary to achieve these aims are clearly set out under 'contents'. These aims and contents, currently extending over 6 fields, have been brought together under the following 5 fields:

1) 'Health' - the field concerned with health of mind and body.

The aims are that the children should:

act in a cheerful and realized fashion and savour the feeling of fulfillment;

move their bodies sufficiently and feel that they want to undertake physical exercise of their own accord;

acquire the habits and attitudes necessary for a healthy and secure lifestyle.

The specified contents include outdoor play, keeping one's surroundings tidy, taking action to prevent illness, etc.

2) 'Human Relations' - the field concerned with contact with people.

The aims are that the children should:

understand the mechanisms of daily life and savour the feeling of being able to carry out an action using one's own ability;

of their own accord make contact with the people round them and have feelings of affection and trust;

acquire the habits and attitudes desirable in social life.

The specified contents include coming to the kindergarten happily, carrying out for oneself the things one has to do, and playing and working together with friends.

3) 'Environment' - the field concerned with contact with nature and everyday phenomena.

The aims are that the children should:

become familiar with their immediate environment and through contact with nature have an interest in a variety of objects and phenomena;

appreciate the importance of contact between themselves and their immediate environment, and of making this part of their daily lives.

by looking at, thinking about and handling familiar objects, deepen their perception of the quality and quantity of materials.

The specified contents include noticing the vastness, beauty and mystery of nature, becoming familiar with and appreciating the importance of plants and animals. It is desirable for the children develop an interest in quantity and shape within the framework of their daily lives.

4) 'Language' - the field concerned with the acquisition of words and language.

The aims are that the children should:

be able to express their feelings in words and feel the joy of communicating them to others;

listen to others speaking and attempt to give an account of what they themselves have experienced or thought;

be capable of understanding the words necessary for everyday living as well as becoming familiar with stories and picture books and enriching their imagination.

The specified contents include expressing one's intentions in words, feeling the joy of using one's imagination through familiarity with stories and picture books, and having an interest in the words and signs necessary for daily life.

5) 'Expression' - the filed concerned with sensitivity and expression.

The aims are that the children should:

develop a richness of sensitivity for the beauty and other qualities of a variety of things;

be able to express by using different kinds of methods what they have felt and thought;

create a wealth of images in their daily lives and enjoy expressing these in different forms of expression.

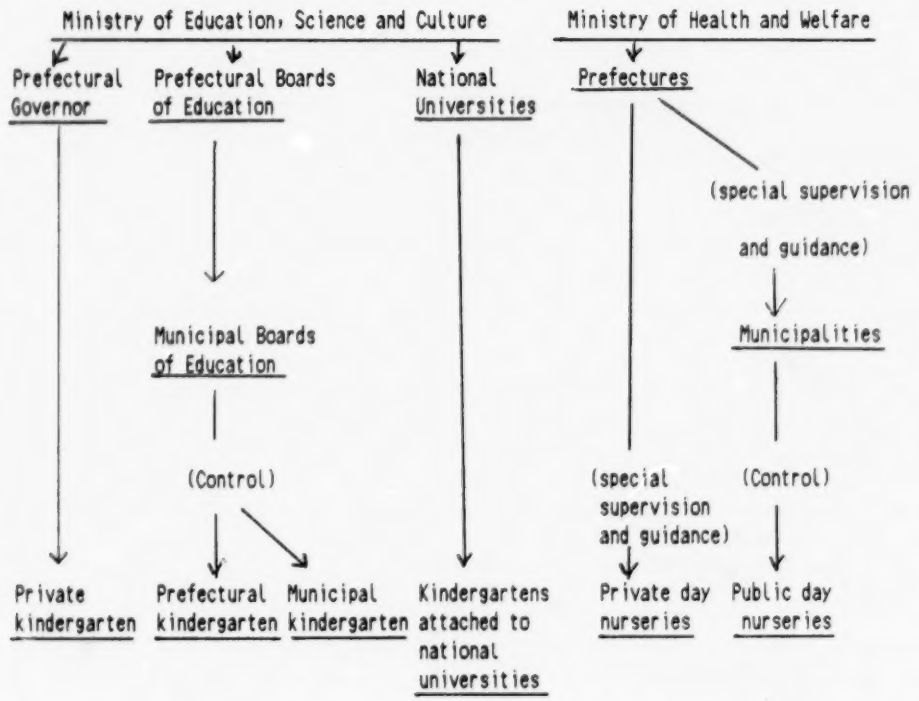
The specified contents include becoming aware of and enjoying a variety of sounds, colours and shapes, and savour the pleasure of being able to transmit feelings and emotions. Children should also engage in creative activities and learn to express the images in their minds in words.

Appendix 1: Kindergartens and Day Nurseries

This contrastive table is intended to provide a comparison between kindergartens and day nurseries in terms of general aspects, the administrative system, implementation, the contents of education and care, and the training of kindergarten teachers and nursery nurses. The relevant laws and regulations are given in brackets ( ), but the contents given here are not necessarily identical with the original text.

	Kindergartens	Day Nurseries
General Aspects		
Law	School Education Law	Child Welfare Law (1947)
Areas covered	School education facilities	Child education facilities
Purpose	Through care and education and the provision of a suitable environment environment to foster the mental and physical development of young children (Education Law, Para 77.)	To be entrusted with the role of daily carers and provide care for those babies and infants for whom it is otherwise lacking. (Child Welfare Law, Para 39).
Administrative System		
Authority	Ministry of Education: Minister of Education	Ministry of Health and Welfare Minister of Health and Welfare
Founder	Only national or local public bodies, or school judical bodies specified in Para 3 of the Private School Law, may found an institution (School Education Law, Para 2)	Central government, prefectures, municipalities, or other bodies may found an institution (Child Welfare Law, Para 35).
Closure	With the exception of national institutions, permission for closure must be obtained from the supervising agency (School Education Law, Para 4). For local institutions: Local Board of Education. For Private institutions: Prefectural governor.	Permission for closure must be obtained from the prefectural governor (Child Welfare Law, Para 35)

Organization Chart



Allocation of costs	The founder of an establishment is responsible for administering it and for the cost of running it. (School Education Law, Para 5)	The difference between the actual cost of care and the charge to parents or guardians is allocated as follows for public and private establishments: national budget: $^{8}/_{10}$ths; prefectural budget: $^{1}/_{10}$th; municipal budget: $^{1}/_{10}$th (Child Welfare Law, Paras 49-57).
Burden on parents	Tuition fees may be collected by the establishment (School Education Law, Para 6). For national and public establishments, the fees are small (the dif-	Fees are collected in proportion to parents' tax rating. No charge is levied on persons inreceipt of public assistance or who have been excused liability for Citizen's Tax.

	ference between fees charged and actual costs is borne by the state or by local public bodies). In the case of private establishments, the bulk of fees are borne by parents; some assistance is provided from the national exchequer through municipalities under the Kindergarten Attendance Promotion Program.	
	Implementation	
Entry procedures	After advertising for applicants, the kindergarten decides who to admit by means of such procedures as a test, interview or lottery, and admits those who are successful.	The mayor of the city, district or village decides which babies or infants lack the necessary care, and takes steps to admit them (Child Welfare Law, Para 24).
Number of operating days	Excluding special circumstances the number of operating days in an academic year should not fall below 220 (School Education Law, Para 75).	
Number of hours per day	The standard is set at 4 hour per day. However, this may be adjusted as necessary in consideration of the level of development of the children or the season of the year. (Kindergarten Education Regulation)	As a general principle, are 8 operating hours per day. However, the duration of are is decided in the light of the working hours of parents or family circumstances in the region concerned (Minimum Standards for Child Welfare Facilities, Para 34).
Age	Children are admitted from three until the beginning of elementary school (School Education Law, Para 80).	Children are admitted until the beginning of elementary school Child Welfare Law, Paras 4 and 39).
Division of children	In principle, children of the same age should be divided into classes onthe day before the academic year begins. One class should as a rule consist of 40 children or less (Standard for Kindergarten Facilities, Para 3 and 4).	
Staff	1. A kindergarten must have a Director, Deputy Director, and teachers (School Education Law, Para 81). 2. In addition to support teachers other necessary staff may be ap-	1. A day nursery must have nursery nurses, a part-time doctor and cooking staff. 2. Regarding the number of nursery nurses, there must be 1 or more for about every 6 babies or infants

	pointed (as above). 3. The duty of the Director is to administer the kindergarten and supervise the appointed staff (as above). 4. The Deputy Director is to assist the Director, coordinate the work of the kindergarten and, as required, assist in educating the children (as above). 5. The teachers are to educate and care for the children (as above). 6. In addition to the Director, there must be at least one full-time teacher per class (Standards for Kindergarten Facilities, Para 5)	under three, 1 or more for every 20 children aged three and not yet four, and 1 or more for every 30 children aged four or more (Minimum Standards for Child Welfare Facilities, Para 33). The meaning of the title 'nursery nurse' is a female person in charge of the welfare of infants in a child welfare facility (Para 13 or Implementation Regulations of the Child Welfare Law). The above rules and regulations are appropriately applied in the case of men (Implementation Regulations, Para 22).
Facilities and Equipment	(School Education Law, Paras 7 to 12) 1. The location of a kindergarten must be suitable for the education of small children and of small children and must be in an environment such that the children can attend without danger. The facilities and equipment must be appropriate from the point of view of educational guidance, health and hygiene, and administration. 2. The kindergarten building must be a low building. In the case of a building of two or more stories, the classrooms, playrooms and toilets must be on the 1st floor. Provided the building is fire-resistant and is equipped with escape routes, it is in order for these facilities located on the second floor as well. As a matter of principle, the kindergarten building and grounds should be located on the same site.	The facilities and equipment in a day nursery are governed by Para 50, Minimum Standards for Child Welfare facilities. 1. A day nursery which admits babies and infants under the age of two must have an infants' or crawling room, a medical room, a kitchen for preparing food and a toilet. 2. the area of the crawling room must be 1.65m^2 or more per person. 3. The area of the crawling room must 3.3 m^2 or more per person. 4. The babies' room and/or crawling room must contain suitable items of equipment. 5. A day nursery that accepts children of two years or more must have a nursery room and/or playroom, plus an outside play area (including an area equivalent to this located near the day nursery), food preparation room and toilet.

Area of the Building		
Class-room	1	2 or more
Area	180m²	320 + 100 X (No. of classes - 2)m²

Area of the Grounds		
Number of classes	2 or more	3 or more
Area	330 + 30 X (no. of classes - 1) m²	400 + 80 X (no. of classes - 3) m²

3. The following facilities are provided:

1) teachers' room; 2) classrooms; 3) playrooms; 4) first aid room; 5) toilet; 6) drinking water, place to wash hands and feet.

Where special circumstances prevail, 2) and 3), also 1) and 4), may be the same room.

4. The following play and educational implements shall be provided:

1) desks, chairs, blackboard;
2) slide, swings, sandpit;
3) blocks, toys, cardboard cutouts for acting, picture books, etc.
4) piano or organ, simple musical instruments, record player and records;
5) materials for first aids, health and hygiene, implements for looking after plants and animals, drawing and painting materials.

The above items must be supplied in sufficient numbers to correspond to the number of children and classes.

6. The area of the nursery and/or playroom should be 1.98 m² or more per person, and that of the outdoor play area 3.3 m² or more per person.

7. The nursery and/or playroom shall contain equipment and items necessary for the care and education of children.

8. The nursery and playroom shall be located on the first floor. However, if set conditions are complied with, they may be on the second or higher floor.

	5. Regarding the following facilities and implements, efforts must be made to see that these are supplied as far as possible: 1) a broadcast speaker system; 2) equipment for showing films and slides; 3) water play area; 4) facilities for washing and cleaning children who become dirty or soiled; 5) food preparation facilities; 6) library; 7) conference room. 6. For some of the above, in special circumstances, if there is no educational objection, the facilities of another establishment may be used.	

Content of Education and Care

Basic Laws	Kindergarten Education Law (1964)	Day Nursery Care Directions (1965) The content of care in a day nursery consists of seeing that the children are well and cheerful, and that there is nothing wrong with their clothing, also conducting a routine health check outside the period of free play and afternoon rest.
	As of February 1989, the regulations are being revised. The direction in which the revisions are moving is indicated in Section 4; given here is a brief account of the system hitherto.	
Basic policies	1. To cultivate harmonious development of mind and body and the formation of a healthy foundation. 2. To cultivate basic living habits and correct social attitudes. 3. To make children interested in nature and society and cultivate thinking ability. 4. To foster ability to listen and impart basic ability to use language. 5. To develop creativity through	1. To develop stable emotions and cultivate the harmonious development of mind and body. 2. While taking all necessary care of the children, to cultivate basic habits and attitudes. 3. To encourage the children in play and work, and foster good social attitudes. 4. Top let the children have an interest in nature and society. 5. To cultivate creativity through expressive activities.

	free use of modes of expression.	
	6. While providing necessary protection and care, to encourage children's sense of self-reliance.	6. To foster feelings and a sense of morality.
	7. To provide appropriate guidance taking accounts of individual differences.	7. To provide care and education which takes account of the stage of development reached.
	8. To give comprehensive guidance appropriate to everyday living experiences.	8. To provide care and education based on a grasp of individual differences and the reality of family and regional circumstances.
	9. To give guidance appropriate to the reality of regional characteristics.	9. While maintaining a harmonious rhythm in daily events, to respect children's independent activities.
	10. To bring out the areas where kindergarten education differs from that in elementary school.	10. To respect spontaneity and provide comprehensive guidance appropriate to daily living experiences.
	11. To maintain contact with edution given in the home.	11. To lay importance on group activities while giving individual activities.
Curriculum	The curriculum is divided into the six areas of health and hygiene, society, nature, language and musical rhythm. Each of these areas consists of more than 10 or 20 subjects, and it is expected that the kindergarten will place these in a framework, organize experience and activities appropriate for a kindergarten, and provide suitable guidance.	Internal structuring is carried out in accordance with the area division corresponding to the stage of development of the children concerned.

Age	Area
under 1 year 3 months to 1 year 3 mts to 2 years	daily life, play
2 years	health and hygiene, society, play
3 years	health and hygiene, society, language, play
4 years	health and hygiene, society
5 years	language, nature
6 years	music, modeling

Training and Qualifications	Kindergarten Director Teachers 1. Educational personnel must possess a certificate awarded under this law (Law for the Certification of Educational Personnel, Para 3). 2. A standard certificate is divided into a first grade and second grade certificate. Holders of a first grade certificate must possess a Bachelor's degree and have obtained the required credits. Holders of a second grade certificate must have spent two years or more at university and have obtained the required credits (Law as above, Paras 4 and 5). 3. Teacher Certificates are awarded by the Prefectural Board of Education (Law as above, Para 5).	Nursery Nurses 1. They must have graduated from a college of other institution designated by the Minister of Health and Welfare for the training of nursery nurses. 2. They must have passed the examination for nursery nurses (Child Welfare Law, Implementation Regulations, Para 13). 3. Those persons intending to take the examination for nursery nurses must be in one of the categories listed below. 1) Persons who have graduated from upper secondary school recognized under the School Education Law, or who have completed 12 years of schooling, following the standard course of study, or who possess a qualification recognized by the Minister of Education as equivalent to the above. 2) Persons who have spent three years or more in a child welfare institution engaged in child care and education. 3) Persons who possess a qualification deemed suitable by the Prefectural Governor in accordance with criteria specified by the Minister of Education.
Training Institutions	Training should be carried out at a university or junior college with a kindergarten teacher training course designated by the Minister of Education, or at another comparable designated institution.	1. Training should be carried at an an institution designated by the Minister of Health and Welfare as suitable for the training of nursery nurses (university, junior college, special training school). 2. It may also be carried out at an institution which aims to prepare candidates for the nursery nurse examination.

Curriculum	Special subjects Specialist subject areas: 1st grade : 16 credits 2nd grade : 8 credits Professional subject areas: 1st grade : 28 credits 2nd grade : 18 credits 1. General education (1st grade: grade: 12 credits from each of humanities, natural sciences and social sciences - total 36 credits: 2nd grade 6 from each, totaling 18. Music and art are to be included in included in humanities, and social science study must include the Constitution of Japan). 2. Specialist subjects (16 credits (2nd grade, 8 credits) from subjects relevant to elementary education, including music arts and crafts, and physical education). 3. Professional subjects (4 credits from principles of education, educational psychology, child psychology; 2nd grade 2 credits. For research on the contents of child care and education, 12 credits for grade 1, and 8 for grade 2. 4. For teaching practice 4 credits for grades 1 and 2.	1. General education (2 credits from each of humanities, social sciences or natural sciences - 4 credits or more). 2. Physical education (1 credit each for lectures and practical work). 3. Special subjects (54 credits in all from welfare, child care and education, psychology, health and hygiene, contents of physical education - basic techniques are compulsory). 4. Nursery nurse practice.